

May 1, 2008

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste  
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

Ralph Culvert Replacement Project

WDID No. 1B08055WNHU

Humboldt County

On March 27 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Carol and C.J. Ralph (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Ralph Culvert Replacement Project (APN 506-281-003-000). The proposed project is on the west side of the Mad River Slough, in the community of Arcata, Humboldt County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with tributaries within the Eureka Plan Hydrologic Unit No.110.00.

Since the early 1900s, a dike and drainage system has been in operation at the site; the dike was last repaired between 1999 and 2004. The purpose of the culvert is to allow freshwater outflow and to prevent salt water intrusion into agricultural grazing land. There are two ponds on the agricultural land with a large population of red-legged frogs and Pacific chorus frog eggs. The existing culvert has a flapper valve and gate valve; corrosion has caused the valves to fail. Manual closure of the gate valve stops the inflow but also blocks the outflow, causing flooding on agricultural/pasture land, preventing cattle from grazing. Saltwater intrusion to the pond area is detrimental to the frog populations.

The existing culvert through the dike is 15-inch diameter and 44 feet long, with a flapper valve on one end and a gate valve on the other end. The applicant proposes to replace the existing culvert with one of the same foot print. The applicant proposes to stage an excavator on top of the dike and to dig out the concrete and pipe. All the spoils from the culvert removal will be used as backfill during placement of the new culvert. None of the debris will be placed in the wetland area. Slough side project activities will occur above water. The applicant proposes to place a cofferdam on the inland side to clear water from 15 feet of ditch. The cofferdam will be removed at the completion of the proposed project. Erosion cloth and riprap cover the outside slope of the dike. The applicant proposes to plant native plants and North Coast pasture mix on the inside slope.

Culvert replacement activities will not result in any impacts to wetlands. Compensatory mitigation is not proposed for this proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation measures for the proposed project will include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control and equipment use near water ways. The project activities will occur during low tide and will require two days for completion.

The applicant has received authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 3 (File No. 21533N), pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. A Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement

from the California Department of Fish and Game is not required for this project. The Regional Water Board has determined that this project will have no significant effect on the environment, and is categorically exempt from CEQA (Class 1, Section 15301 Existing Facilities).

The information contained in this public notice is a summary of the applicant's culvert replacement activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file are available for public review.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Diana Henriouille at (707) 576-2350 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.